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Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

28 December 1983

NOTE TO: Deputy Director of Global Issues

FROM: David B. Low
National Intelligence Officer at Large

SUBJECT: Soviet Nuclear Nonproliferation Policy -- November 1983
Draft Assessment

1. In response to your 1 December 1983 request for my thoughts on this paper, I have finally been able to review the draft. I apologize for the delay.

2. I believe it is important during 1984 that the NIC take a careful look at Soviet nonproliferation policy. This is the case for two primary reasons:

a. It is important to determine what the relationship is, if any, between the positive tone of the nonproliferation bilaterals and the breakoff in arms control negotiations. For example, what will be the impact on the nonproliferation bilaterals of the absence of any other major bilateral involvement, and can the presence of these bilaterals have any positive impact on the much larger arms control negotiations? As a side issue, it is important to assess whether any Soviet concessions in the nonproliferation context are relevant to arms control (such as access to USSR facilities).

b. We and others will be expending a lot of effort in 1984 in preparation for the NPT Review Conference in 1985. I have already begun discussions in this regard with Lewis Dunn, Assistant Director of ACDA, who will have primary responsibility for these preparations. The Soviet role will be very significant, as the paper touches on.

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3. Therefore, I do believe that a thorough analysis of this topic is timely. In addition, we have scheduled on the NIC Production Plan for 1984 a SNIE on Soviet Nuclear Export and Nonproliferation Policies.

4. This draft does to me represent a solid basis for a background assessment of Soviet nonproliferation policy. The main problem is its tone. It seems to me that the key to setting the right tone is the material in the box which follows page A-3 (Two Policy Perspectives). This kind of material could be used early in the text to demonstrate that Soviet activity in this arena (as in most others) has two aspects -- the technical and the political (or self-serving). In my view the latter always will predominate and control the role played by the former, even though in many cases a straightforward technical policy is consistent with Soviet political objectives and can therefore become general policy.

5. Beyond this, I agree with your assessment that certain aspects of the paper, such as specifics on Soviet export policy and Soviet access to and use of IAEA information, could be expanded in text, footnotes or annex. In addition:

- The SOVA perspective would be important with respect to the overall tone (cynicism level) and the impact of the stalling of INF negotiations.
- The impact of the INF and START cessation of negotiations must now be considered together with some assessment of the relationship between this and our bilaterals as noted above.
- The extent and importance of access to USSR facilities must be examined (in my view ultimately there is little transferability to the INF context).
- The Soviet role in the NPT Conference preparations could receive more focused attention.
- The Key Judgments must be much tougher and tighter.

6. Overall, my comments in paragraph 5 above may be telling you more about how I see a SNIE developing than this particular paper. It may be that, after appropriate caveats about what this paper is not attempting to address, the paper could serve a useful but relatively narrow, background role without necessarily engaging all of these broader issues.



David B. Low

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